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INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2216
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7488
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1687
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 7249
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 3328
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 1768
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2908
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 003857

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SUBJECT: SUICIDE ATTACKS SHAKE RAWALPINDI

REF: PESHAWAR 575

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On September 4, 31 people were killed and 67 injured in two separate suicide bomb attacks on government targets in Islamabad's neighboring city of Rawalpindi. In the short-term these attacks and the kidnapping (reftel) of Frontier Corps soldiers in Waziristan will undermine public confidence in the government/military. It is too soon to predict whether these attacks will build public support for actions against militants in the long term. Security and checkpoints have been increased throughout Rawalpindi and Islamabad. All mission staff are safe and accounted for. End Summary.

¶2. (U) In the early morning hours of September 4, two successive bombs went off in the downtown area of Rawalpindi. The first bomb went off near Qasim Market at 7:17 am, targeting a bus carrying Defense Ministry staff. The second blast occurred minutes later in RA Bazaar. Security personnel immediately cordoned off the areas and rescue workers and army personnel moved in to help the injured and wounded. The attacks left 31 people dead and 67 people injured.

¶3. (C) Authorities confirm that the large blasts were suicide attacks, though there is some disagreement whether both or one of the blasts were suicide bombings. Government officials have put Rawalpindi and neighboring Islamabad on high alert, with increased security checkpoints and hospitals on standby. The district government of Rawalpindi has condemned the attacks and announced a full investigation into the incident. Officials are claiming that the bombers had direct contacts with tribal militants, which is supported by their targeting of government officials.

¶4. (C) Comment: Suicide attacks in Rawalpindi have brought what is often described as tribal violence directly to the heart of Pakistan's military establishment. After the initial spate of post-Red Mosque attacks, August had been relatively quiet in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Yesterday's bombings are a stark reminder that the daily insecurity and violence that plague the tribal areas, make Pakistan's settled areas increasingly vulnerable as well. End Comment.

PATTERSON